

# The Power of Possibility

## Steelcase



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**Is your case study linked to an ‘ugly truth’ or a ‘key success factor’?**  
Success - Sustainability linked to performance

**What does the case study help tackle?**

Our path to net zero prioritizes transforming our entire business – our products, operations and transportation – what we make, how we make it, and the ways we deliver it:

- **Products:** Reduce the largest source of carbon emissions, which is embodied in our products, by designing for circularity and choosing and using materials responsibly.
- **Operations:** Invest in energy efficiency, onsite solar and waste reduction strategies in our own operations to achieve both our 2030 and 2050 carbon emissions reduction goals.
- **Transportation:** Transform our distribution, delivery, travel and commuting practices to reduce carbon emissions.

We are further amplifying our impact through engagement, collaboration & transparency with employees, suppliers, customers and peers worldwide to achieve net zero. We are the first in our industry to publish a net-zero transition plan. Our role as an industry leader demands that we develop & transparently share our ambitious - and achievable - plan for reaching our net-zero goals.

**What was the outcome and how did you measure it?**

[Our net-zero transition plan](#) outlines our strategy and the actions we are taking to align with a 1.5°C world while supporting the preservation and restoration of nature. It translates our long-term objectives into near-term actions. It is integrated into our corporate strategy, and we commit to reporting progress in our CDP disclosures and in our annual [Impact Report](#).

**Who was involved (departments/roles)? How did you justify it to the business?**

This transition plan demonstrates our commitment to designing a net-zero future throughout our entire value chain. It encompasses what we make, how we make it and the ways we deliver it. The initiatives spelled out in our transition plan & the publication of the plan itself was a cross-collaborative initiative that ranges from the CEO to the personnel on the plant floor, to suppliers. Since most of our emissions are associated with our product supply chain, we are engaging 80% of our suppliers by emissions to set their own science-based targets by 2025, laying a foundation for achieving our net-zero commitment.

**What are your watch-outs for others attempting this?**

Clear communication and stakeholder engagement are key. Ultimately, a net-zero future needs us all. With a topic of this magnitude, it takes time and intentionality to socialize the need and related activities of action with senior and executive leadership. It's important to start communications early to allow ample time to educate, influence and develop the leadership teams' individual and collective understanding of the problem as well as its proposed, iterative solution. It's also necessary to become comfortable with sharing and committing to a plan or roadmap so far into the future. Vacillating between long term visions and short term, iterative action plans are of utmost importance.

**With hindsight, what would you have done differently?**

We're proud of our plan and its publication and, at this point, do not feel as though we would have done anything differently. We communicated the needs, expectations and deliverables in clear and actionable ways not just to executive and senior leadership but to the entire body of the organization.

**What were the key success factors?**

Effectively educating senior leadership on the importance of not only a net-zero commitment (which is a feat in and of itself), but also on being credible in our commitment through transparent communication.

**How would you recommend those with few resources attempt this?**

To look to how other companies & organizations have made public commitments and to look to best practice public guidance documents as well (e.g. those provided through the Science Based Targets initiative). Smaller companies can also size their plans to their companies, so it doesn't have to be as great an undertaking.

**Who were the main drivers (boots on the ground), and the main leadership sponsor?**

We have years of executive management involvement on our sustainability project work, so many of our senior executives were instrumental in pushing this project forward. One key individual from our senior leadership team who was more recently involved and essential to our Net-Zero Transition Plan development and ultimate publication was our VP of Brand Communications. Additionally, our Communications team recently reorganized and we now have dedicated resources for ESG & sustainability-related topics, which has been imperative to our success.

